

REMARKS

I. Introduction

Claims 1 to 4 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicant notes with appreciation the acknowledgment of the claim for foreign priority and the indication that all of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

II. Objection to the Specification

The Specification was objected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph as allegedly “not written in ‘full, clear, concise, and exact terms.’” Applicants respectfully traverse this objection for the following reasons.

The Office Action alleges that the language “free space” on page 4, lines 15 to 16 is not clear. Figure 2 has been amended to include reference number 8 designating free spaces. No new matter has been added. Applicants respectfully submit that the language “free space,” in light of the amendment to Figure 2, is sufficiently clear.

The Office Action further alleges that the language “contact region 9 of . . . such a manner” on page 4, lines 18 to 19 is unclear. Applicants respectfully submit that this language would have clearly conveyed to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of filing that the contact region 9 is the region on each lamellae 7 which may contact the knife blade to form an electrical connection.

The Office Action further alleges that the language “the limiting elements of . . . retention spring 3” is not clear. Applicants respectfully submit that the Specification makes clear that the limiting elements may correspond to the box-shaped, external retention spring, which embraces the contact lamellae. See p. 3, lines 11 to 12.

Therefore, for all the foregoing reasons, withdrawal of the objection to the Specification is respectfully requested.

III. Rejection of Claims 1 to 4 Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1 to 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as allegedly indefinite. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 to 4 fully comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph for the following reasons.

The second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 merely requires that the claims set out and circumscribe a particular subject matter with a reasonable degree of clarity and particularity. As provided in M.P.E.P. § 2173.02, the “focus during examination of claims for compliance with the requirement for definiteness of 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph is whether the claim meets the threshold requirement of clarity and precision.” In this regard, the “essential inquiry pertaining to this requirement is whether the claims set out and circumscribe a particular subject matter with a reasonable degree of clarity and particularity.” Id. (emphasis added). “Definiteness of claim language must be analyzed, not in a vacuum, but in light of[, inter alia, the] content of the particular application disclosure[and the] claim interpretation that would be given by one possessing the ordinary level of skill in the pertinent art at the time the invention was made.” Id. If the claims, when read in light of the Specification, reasonably apprise those skilled in the art both of the utilization and scope of the invention, and if the language is as precise as the subject matter permits, the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 demands no more. M.P.E.P. § 2173.05(a) (citing Shatterproof Glass Corp. v. Libbey Owens Ford Co., 758 F.2d 613, 225 U.S.P.Q. 634 (Fed. Cir. 1985)).

The Office Action alleges that the “inner contact part” and “spring element adapted to be placed over the inner contact part,” as recited in claim 1, are not clear because they are allegedly not disclosed in the Specification. As an initial matter, there is no requirement that the words used in the claims must match those used in the Specification. M.P.E.P. § 2173.05(e). Applicants respectfully submit that the terms “inner contact part” and “spring element” are sufficiently clear and refer the Examiner to the Specification, for example, at p. 1, lines 11 to 30 and p. 4, lines 4 to 21.

The Office Action further alleges that the language “contact part” of the contact segment, as recited in claim 1, is not clear because it is allegedly not disclosed in the Specification. Again, it is noted that there is no requirement that the words used in the claims must match those used in the Specification. Applicants

respectfully submit that the term “contact part” is sufficiently clear and refer the Examiner to the Specification, for example, at p. 4, lines 17 to 18.

The Office Action further alleges that the language “support elements,” as recited in claim 3, is not clear because it is allegedly not disclosed in the Specification. Figure 1 has been amended to show the support element, labeled 13. Further, the Specification has been amended to refer to this reference number. Support for this amendment may be found in the Specification, for example, at p. 7, lines 12 to 13. No new matter has been added.

The Office Action further alleges that it is not clear what the language “lateral limiting elements,” as recited in claim 4 is referring to. Applicants respectfully submit that the Specification makes clear that limiting elements may correspond to the box-shaped, external retention spring, which embraces the contact lamellae. See p. 3, lines 11 to 12.

Therefore, for all the foregoing reasons, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. Rejection of Claims 1 to 4 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1 to 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,102,752 (“Bommel et al.”). Applicants respectfully submit that Bommel et al. do not anticipate the present claims for the following reasons.

Claim 1 relates to an electrical connector in the form of a socket contact. Claim 1 recites that the electrical connector includes an inner contact part and a spring element adapted to be placed over the inner contact part. Claim 1 recites that the inner contact part includes an attachment part for receiving a bare end of an electrical line, a center segment, and a contact segment having a contact part. Claim 1 recites that the contact part has at least three contact lamellae pointing away from the center segment that are freely movable at their free end. Claim 1 further recites that each of the contact lamellae have at least one contact point for producing an electrical plug connection to a knife blade.

Bommel et al. purportedly relate to a two-part electrical socket contact. The socket contact is stated to include a contact body 2 and an outer cantilever spring 3. See col. 3, lines 66 to 67. The contact body 2 is stated to include a contact making section 4, which in turn is stated to be provided with two opposing contact springs 8 and 9. See col. 4, lines 11 to 12.

Nowhere do Bommel et al. disclose, or even suggest, an inner contact part having at least three contact lamellae, as recited in claim 1. As indicated above, the contact body 2 of Bommel et al. is stated to include only two contact springs 8 and 9. Therefore, Bommel et al. do not disclose, or even suggest, all of the limitations of claim 1.

To anticipate a claim, each and every element as set forth in the claim must be found in a single prior art reference. Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of Calif., 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 U.S.P.Q.2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Furthermore, "[t]he identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the . . . claim." Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co., 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 U.S.P.Q.2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989). That is, the prior art must describe the elements arranged as required by the claims. In re Bond, 910 F.2d 831, 15 U.S.P.Q.2d 1566 (Fed. Cir. 1990). As more fully set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that Bommel et al. do not disclose, or even suggest, an inner contact part having at least three contact lamellae, as recited in claim 1. It is therefore respectfully submitted that Bommel et al. do not anticipate claim 1. Withdrawal of the present rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

As for claims 2 to 4, which ultimately depend from claim 1 and therefore include all of the limitations of claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are patentable over Bommel et al. for at least the same reasons provided above in support of the patentability of claim 1.

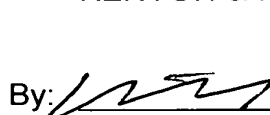
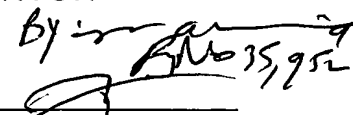
V. Conclusion

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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